LEGISLATIVE PETITIONS

Legislative petitions are original documents that were submitted to the Tennessee General Assembly, requesting that legislative action be taken on matters of concerns to individuals, municipal governments or county governments. If the law was passed, the text of the law was published in the series Acts of Tennessee.

While many petitions were submitted, not all resulted in a legislative act. Legislative acts were also passed without there being a petition submitted. The majority of the original petitions were returned to the petitioner, although the Tennessee General Assembly did retain many of the documents.

The petitions listed in this index can help give a location for an individual on a given date. Generally, the petitions do not give personal information about the person named; however, there are exceptions, such as petitions requesting a divorce or petitions requesting the legalization of illegitimate children. Estate settlements may also help to identify heirs and approximate death dates of those without wills.

This index has been created from the names and subjects that appear in the petition text itself. No attempt has been made to list the hundreds of names that signed the petitions.

The petitions were originally given to the Tennessee State Library and Archives in a collection without dates or numbers assigned to them. TSLA staff grouped and numbered the items in preparation to the records being microfilmed. In some cases, petitions may have a date that does not agree with the year of the actual legislative act that was passed.

Two types of numbering systems were used as these items were cataloged. The years 1799-1813 show the year, session and number of the petition submitted during that session. Beginning with the 1815, numbers were assigned to the petitions in a straight numerical sequence without concern of the sessions held in that legislative term.

When additional years are added to the index, an announcement will be posted under "News and Updates" on the TSLA home page.